



# Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

## Ventura, CA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Ventura for a Brownfields Pilot. The Westside Community of Ventura (population 11,684) is one of the city's oldest and most diverse neighborhoods, where approximately 50 percent of the population is Hispanic. It also has an unemployment rate of 8.6 percent, which is double that of the city rate. There are 19 hazardous waste sites per square mile in the Westside area, compared to just one per square mile in the rest of Ventura.

Ventura is a city better known for its beaches than its brownfields. It was a small agricultural community up until the 1920s when oil was discovered in the hills beyond the city limits. By the 1930s, the population had doubled and the Westside neighborhood became home to the industry that supported oil production. The Westside area is approximately 1.68 square miles and contains such sites as an ammonia nitrate plant, a large salvage and metal recycling operation, an abandoned rocklite mine, and various heavy commercial and industrial operations. In the 1990s, however, the oil industry had abandoned the Westside area, leaving behind vacated industrial facilities and causing the unemployment rate to rise. The city estimates there are approximately 30 known brownfields sites in the Westside neighborhood, many

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



Ventura, California

Date of Announcement:  
June 1999

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets the 1.68-square-mile Westside Community of Ventura, containing approximately 30 brownfields sites.

#### Contacts:

Economic Development Manager  
(805) 654-7819

Regional Brownfields Team  
U.S. EPA - Region 9  
(415) 744-2237

Visit the EPA Region 9 Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/region09/waste/brown/index.html>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

with unknown levels of contamination. Many of these parcels are adjacent to residential neighborhoods, school, parks, and open space; specifically, the ammonia plant is located near the Ventura River.

## OBJECTIVES

The city's goal is to revitalize the Westside area according to the master plan developed by the Westside Community Council (WCC), a non-profit, community-based organization dedicated to addressing the neighborhood's social and economic issues. The Westside Revitalization Strategy calls for attracting and retaining high-tech industries that can "plug in" to the community's existing technological infrastructure. The Pilot's objective is to conduct environmental assessments on former industrial properties in the Westside area in order to leverage their cleanup and redevelopment. By removing any environmental uncertainty from the sites, the Pilot can help make the sites more attractive to prospective developers. The additional jobs and tax revenues created by these new businesses would begin to reverse the decline of the Westside area.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Performing Phase I site assessments across the Westside Community and Phase II site assessments at sites that warrant them;
- Performing a benchmark study before the Phase I and II assessments to document current conditions in the Westside area;
- Creating a cleanup plan;
- Conducting public outreach targeted to under-represented populations; and
- Conducting an Insurance Archeology Feasibility Study for the Westside area to determine insurance status of the properties.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.